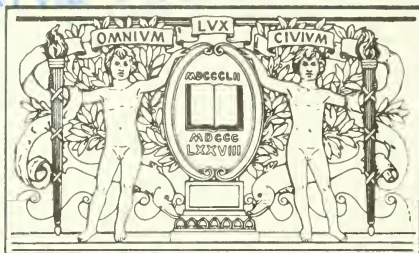


Art & Education

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The Arts

FINE ARTS DEPT.



BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY



A Symposium held in the Wiggin Gallery

Boston Public Library, on May 6, 1966

celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of

the Albert H. Wiggin Collection of Prints

and Drawings as a public collection

Art & Education

The speakers and their subjects:

DAVID McCORD On Being a Noticer

DAVID B. LITTLE Art in a Library

SINCLAIR H. HITCHINGS A New Audience for

our Public Collections **BOSTON 1966**

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FOREWORD

ON Friday morning, May 6, 1966, a group of artists, collectors, art dealers, museum directors, librarians, curators and other friends of the arts gathered in the Wiggin Gallery of the Boston Public Library to hear three talks under the general title, *Art and Education*.

The role of a collection of art within a public library was the subject which underlay this broader title. For twenty-five years the Albert H. Wiggin Collection of prints and drawings has been a public collection within the Boston Public Library. Mr. Wiggin, in presenting his collection to the Library in 1941, emphasized the opportunities it offered as a force in education. There could be no more appropriate way of celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of the collection's public life than by taking a fresh look at some of the processes by which education is found in the visual arts, and some of the contributions which libraries can make to this process.

The audience for the talks which are printed here was limited to one hundred, a group small enough to be seated in the Wiggin Gallery itself. The flower-filled gallery held an exhibition, *Master Prints and Drawings from the Albert H. Wiggin Collection*, which had been opened the previous afternoon, on the occasion of a first viewing by the public of a series of eleven dioramas, *Printmakers at Work*, which are on permanent ex-

hibition in a small gallery designed for them, adjoining the main exhibition gallery.

David McCord, poet and essayist, an accomplished watercolorist and longstanding collector of prints and drawings, agreed to speak at the symposium on the theme of every man's experiences which can lead to a discovery of art. His personal testimony is printed as the opening essay in this book.

David B. Little is specially qualified to link this world of individual experience to the library art collection and art gallery. He is Secretary and Registrar of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. In a different role, as President of the Corporation of the Concord Free Public Library, he plans and mounts a yearly series of exhibitions in the library's gallery. He also helps to guide the library's permanent collections of art.

The larger a library's collection of art becomes, the more it is likely to combine the qualities of library and museum, concerned from day to day, through the work of a permanent staff, with the preservation and accessibility of many works of art. At least three American public library collections—in the New York Public Library, the Free Library of Philadelphia, and the Boston Public Library—have reached this size.

Like many of the country's museums, each of these institutions is an energetic collector of art on a considerable scale. Most important of all their activities in the world of art, in many ways, however, are the means by which they reach out to a wide audience. To discuss the services of public collections to today's audience for art in America, Sinclair H. Hitchings, the Boston Public Library's Keeper of Prints, contributed the concluding essay to be found in these pages.

Philip J. McNiff

Director, Boston Public Library

DAVID McCORD

On Being a Noticer

ART has never been defined. Poetry, for that matter, has never been defined, though Emily Dickinson came as near success as anyone before or since. When Keats says that “The poetry of earth is never dead,” just what does he mean? Earth is not a poem: Earth is a planet, sustaining life at the moment, still evolving from original fiery magma toward a lifeless ball of cinders. It happens that man, to whom she is in no way physically committed, is physically and wholly committed to her. And he is committed just at the time when all geomorphic systems are at go, as the boys upstairs keep telling us. Man lives today precisely at the optimum of Earth’s ability to extend him. His reckless plundering has not gone too far; and Earth in turn is plausibly in balance day and night, winter into summer, jealous of her oxygen, miraculous with chlorophyll, bounteous with heat and food and hardware. All her oceans, rivers, mountains, valleys, plains—her lakes and deserts even—hold in definition. Nothing will admit of crude erosion, vast and now computered though it be. She is paradise and prodigal. She is, indeed, herself the poetry that poets—even savage social poets—never fail to recognize, no matter how interpretation may be qualified by squalor lifted out of context. Earth is a work of art; and staring in our face we have the clouds, the Bedouin’s conspectus

of familiar stars, the look of rain, the shape of snow, the foaming surf, the feel of wind and sunshine, and the song of birds. But we say we do not know exactly what art is.

I give you this accounting in good faith, because unless we honor our commitment to this earth we shall not feel with poets, painters, sculptors, architects, typographers; with potters, stonecutters, woodworkers, craftsmen, and designers—with musicians even, though we have no tactile margin on that one great glancing art; nor shall we sense that in the things they do in smaller measure is reflected—though the artist be the last to tell you—something of the great design. This pantheistic premise does not mean that poets should be Wordsworth, painters pure Corot, engravers Bewick; or that buildings make Pueblos of us all. Only a fool would say that most great artists are in love with nature. Many are not and never were. Many despise in truth or in the dark the very noun. Picasso does not meet me on the beach, Chagall on mountain tops, Kandinsky in Omaha, Dufy (in spite of his brave woodcut “Fishing”) on a trout stream. That is not the point. Even less the point that Picasso says “Through art we express our conception of what nature is not.” The point is that dynamics, symmetry, suspensions, chords and monotones, surrealism and pop art; the last least curve or dot or butchered polygon or fractured rhythm; the break-up principle in such as Klee, the astigmatic quality of Euclid’s traffickers in blacks and whites—all this, all these, all those, the astronomers, the physicists in solid state, marine biologists, conchologists, coleopterists, stress-testing metallurgists, and such microminded stroboscopic people in the lab have seen unfold. Ask the speleologist; ask the ranger in his wind-eroded Utah. Examine one Palomar photograph of the great nebula in Orion. Form is everything; but form is never really new. Nature always got there just ahead of us. Only the use of form, the symphony of form, form formulating form, is new. A morn-

ing's walk out in the sun some unexpected country day will fit the least Thoreauvian among us to enter any gallery or museum. For what? For anything from Manet to Miró; from Homer to Max Weber. For something old and proven; something wild, incredible. What pleased you most in seeing all those marvels of Greek gold last winter in the MFA? Was it not that man with his two hands and his two eyes and his one brain could fashion what would take your breath away as turquoise water in the Caribbean or pale sunlight on green needles once in Maine did long ago?

But older than the Greece of Pericles, the truly ancient arts the layman latches on to are Egyptian or Chinese, the Mayan calendar, the primitive brute strength in Olmec carving, sculpture, and the like. These precious few reminders leave but scant uncertainty about the great design of which I speak. Art opened in some poignant periods of history with one's birth, descending with the body to the grave, as if a caul, omentum—what you will—assured cohesion in all manifest responses of man striving Blake-like on his pointed ladder upward toward “I want, I want.” The world, we think, has come a long way up the road from Ra, the sun-god; from Sidon; from far “beyond the village that men still call Tyre”; from astronomy enlivened in cold stone, from stairwells to the stars. And you have seen abstractions in old Persian parchment, in written Arabic, and in the larval state of rich Chinese calligraphy, in photographs of Easter Island monoliths that sometimes make us wonder why we so resist the ugly thought of travelling full circle. We do it every day. If you want to look at Winnie the Pooh in sculpture, you will find him small and spry and to the life in the Fogg Museum of Art. He is Chinese, carved in jade, Han Dynasty, 206 B.C.–221 A.D. And if some modern splayfoot statue, belly-bold from malnutrition, strikes you as familiar, the primitives of Africa or Mexico will show you how some savage did it up

with style and grace. I often wonder what old Hudson of *Green Mansions* would have thought of Epstein's *Rima*. It made me think of butterflies in concrete.

I say all this while sitting on a packing case inside an antique shop down East, or possibly while thumbing through some broken set of wood engravings from the eighteenth century; or even just while standing here amid this exegesis of fine prints. I say it at a time when the proliferation of man's art across the centuries is wonderfully itinerant. Unlike old wine, old art would seem to travel well. Contemporary art, so much of it so here today and gone tomorrow, does its travelling by chain reaction. And yet, while we have all but drowned ourselves in art—good art and bad; magnificent, pathetic—we have made but pitifully small progress as a nation—as a mass of people—beyond the jerry-built frontiers of gift-shoppes. We live with gadgetry and pick our culture off the belt-lines. Consider the average family in, or on the edge of, urban life. Consider the apartment or the rancho. Each large rectangular wall space, barrenly requiring that big picture window of the same dimensions, does not seem to beg for art. It begs for decoration—chiefly what it gets in splashy color. And likewise, in the new economy respecting bookshelves, there is little chance to lean an etching, aquatint, or wood-engraving at eye-level. Nothing equals long low bookshelves full of lifetime lived-with books to lay the ground-bass for a fugue of simple frames with what you will well matted behind glass. The Second Law of collectors' Thermodynamics is where to put things. Even bad things well arranged may have some charm. But charm itself is an old up-attic word half obsolete. It is, however, cousin to good taste; and taste is letter A on this agenda.

No one of us can possibly devise, imagine, or elect what sort of

art will please our neighbors. The one prime factor in man's art-response is taste. Your taste is not mine; and better for each of us that this is so. Your love of elephants, especially elephants emerging out of stone, is not my fondness for green glaze— young-apple-green, that is—once found in Gruebeware, a Boston product not now much in style, or even in existence. Because I like the worn and faded look of some round homely tiles on which perhaps three generations up New Hampshire way once stood their coffee pots does not prepare me for your hanker after old gin bottles—brown as Bennington itself. I may like Dodge MacKnight and you perhaps John Marin. That comes closer to converging tastes in spite of the great distance in technique, approach, and subject which still separates these two: Marin, close at times to Paul Cézanne and Delaunay; MacKnight much closer to his Shelburne and Cape Cod. And you may scorn my small but carefully chosen string of horse-brasses out of equine London; but then I—I don't know what you possibly can see in all those Sandwich hats, fish arrowheads, your Roman (as against Greek) coins; your eggplantation of old African drums, Australian boomerangs. Taste! How strange it is; how unpredictable! How deviously arrived at; and yet how healthy that, like snowflakes, no two ever match. How easy to defend one's own; how stimulating to destroy another's! Taste is, as Morris Bishop said in twelve bright lines, what one old person named McPherson considered it to be: a debatable asset.

And very often I'd get out of arguments I'd got in:
"It's all a question of taste," I'd say, "and your taste is rotten."

The point, however, is that we believe in—we must believe in—cultivate, and nourish our own good taste, assuming that we have it, or think we have it. When did we first become aware of this? If we look back to childhood we should stumble

on the clue. The search, if you care to rummage in old attics, may take a little time. The clue may not be clear at first. We should begin by thinking of the books we read when young. My own first light is in the books. It was Edward Lear who woke me when I was five years old and learned "The Owl and the Pussy-Cat" by heart. Nonsense, I could argue, is a touchstone to true values. But then the drawings were important too; for they were drawings quite different from any others I had seen in the family bookcase. The next was *Alice*—Sir John Tenniel more than Carroll; *Uncle Remus*, with Frost and Harris equal; and then the Oz books—Baum and John R. Neil together, for here I can never separate the two. In poetry the clues are harder to find; but I recall a few not too inspiring words dredged out of someone's *Iliad*, with which the doors swung open. But would they not have swung wide open for these six brief other words culled out of all the nursery rhymes extant—six words which half a dozen famous poets have since taken for themselves? Chesterton believed them better known than any single fragment in the English language. Need I say them? I say them over often enough; why not once more?

Over the hills and far away.

Few biographies, I think, wind through the period of childhood without a hint that will explain some later interest, be it statesmanship or book collecting, mountain climbing, or reading Jane Austen. Here is one such passage from a wistful, tough, and brave small book called *This Time Next Week* by Leslie Thomas (1964), "the autobiography of a happy [English] orphan." How better one's arrival in imagination's other place?

A boy's mind is a circus of excitements. It is full of heroes and villains, deeds and misdeeds; dreams in which he scores goals, or finds fame or treasure, or beautiful and adoring girls. He does not, not often anyway, look at a group of trees idling against the sky and find

happiness in the way they are. Nor does he notice that some words have shape and color, nor that music is more than sound, nor that stone and wood are eloquent and lovely. . . . But it comes. It can occur quite suddenly, like a conversation, as it did to me. I did not stop caring about the other things. I still played football and had fights and threw stones, but I had a new awareness of things. . . . Afternoons in winter when the light goes early; water in its wild state, and shadows on water; lanes and roads in summer, empty and dusty; voices calling across fields at night. And strong, sweet tea, and warm jerseys; wild animals who do not see you first; trees, any sort; old maps and books and letters, brown and full of secret things. Every clear morning, simple, beautiful words. Sea-gulls, big black-birds, and homecomings.

That sounds familiar, doesn't it? It sounds familiar in the song about it sung by Julie Andrews in *The Sound of Music*. It is something basic and quite secret in us all: the beginning of taste. Sometimes it is a wakening to just one thing, as when so long ago, as I was driven through the town of Hingham, I suddenly became aware of brick-end Colonial houses. Since then I have ransacked almost every village in New England for examples of an architectural style the 80's and the 90's in their mansard fever were to dwarf with ugliness. I was out of college, I think, before it ever occurred to me to buy an etching, let alone an aquatint or a wood engraving. My grandmother's house in Pennsylvania was full of family portraits, giant photographs of Greek and Roman ruins as befitting the fine Greek and Latin scholar that my minister-grandfather must have been. There was, of course, the inevitable Millet; but also a judicious spread or sprinkle of Japanese prints and kakemonos which my uncle, who had known Lafcadio Hearn, brought back from two long years of engineering in and out of Tokyo. I never bought an oriental print myself; but somehow the remembrance of the fact that one gay, wise, and well-bred uncle had collected things sug-

gested that my books deserved some complementary art. I bought a fine engraver's proof of a 1726 Harvard building from my new friend Mr. Holman up on Park Street. In that building was my office. The proof was marked 15 and I put up some argument that I could not afford just quite that much. Mr. Holman led me on until offered ten; and then I learned that we were talking about cents, not dollars. I also bought from Mr. Holman one small etching of a Tuttle owl, complete with mouse and strong clear thyroid eyes. Those two pebbles rolling down a cliff released a slide of sand in which the rocks turned into owls of stone and wood; of amber, clay, glass, porcelain, Amazonite. I have an owl or maybe two for every year since then. What's more, the Tuttle etching touched the fisherman I always was and sent me headlong after Norman Wilkinson, a drypoint etcher far too little known this side of chalk-streams and wild salmon rivers of the British Isles.

And then an older doctor friend one day invited me to see his office. It was full of prints and watercolors: Benson, Sargent, Rice, La Farge, MacKnight. The doctor's hobby was old whaling prints; but it was more than that. His hobby was a quiet search for anything of genuine pictorial or visual delight. He made me wish I were a doctor; for whenever I would say to him, Where did you come on that? the answer was invariably three words: a grateful patient. He kept his old Phi Beta Kappa key hung chainless from a nail to show a flash of gold against the fine Colonial skewer which he gave me in the end. My life was changed; my office fast became an index to my sampling in the world of wood engravings, aquatints, good pencil drawings, drypoints, watercolors; old Dutch brass tobacco boxes, Indian artifacts; burl bowls, old tavern tables, and one growing specialty: historic views of Frontenac's Quebec—a city I had first seen as a boy of seven. And as to cities, one can easily acquire a group of suitable old prints of those which figure in your family

life across as many generations as you wish. Bartletts for a start; but Daniells on that level are much better. A trip abroad, to Mexico or Canada, or simply to the chain of west-coast cities from Vancouver south to San Diego usually turns up something in one's range of interests; often something of awakening joy which leads the traveller on and on. My one unique and golf-ball size Alaskan globe carved lovingly by some enigmatically named Eskimo, presumably from walrus ivory, does not subscribe to Willkie's one-world view. The carver limited himself to just the North and South American continents; the rest is open sea, or OCERN, in his spelling. This might have led me out across the tundra to small whales, seals, kayaks and the like, but it did not. It led me to a brace of snowy owls. Sometimes it is a good thing to begin and stop right where you are.

All amateur collectors make mistakes, and mine are many. When I stumbled once upon a large fresh cache of Edward Lear's exquisite pen-and-ink wash drawings in Great Russell Square in London, I was unequipped in foresight and in pounds to take advantage of what will not come again. I bought four drawings, each one chosen for Lear's scattered notes in his phonetic spelling, and I paid just eight cheap guineas for the lot. When I returned to Boston, other Lears less pompsidilious from that same open sesame were selling for \$100 each.

Now there is one great attribute without which you are handicapped in satisfying impulse or desire to gather prints or etchings, pencil drawings, brasses, owls, or elephants, or anything within the range of reason. One has to be a noticer. The countryman, if I may come full circle to my opening paragraphs, has here one sharp advantage over him or her who happens to be born and bred to city life. Thoreau could see more in a radius of two miles from his hut at Walden Pond than most of us who think we know metropolis will ever see or fathom. It is

he with country background, not the city dweller, who is likely to make mental catalogues of Richardson brick railway stations, curious fenestration, iron grillwork, queer inscriptions, ginkgo trees and scholar trees, of lithic birds in old cathedral doorways, graceful stairwells and good newel posts, old courtyards where the cobblestones reflect the morning sun. For all a poet is and ever will be of the tribe of noticers—like Frost and Eliot, Auden, John Ciardi, to choose a quartet of unlike examples—few have written poems on the subject. Auden does speak, in *The Dyer's Hand*, of every poet's born concern with liking to make lists of things: the catalogue of ships, the Rabelaisian catalogues, the catalogue of whales in *Moby Dick*, of flowers in Edward Thomas, and all such. My friend The Silent Traveller, Chiang Yee, could show me more of my New York in five short hours than I could show him of my Boston in a week. The poet has to be a noticer, or he is not a poet. I think the same holds true for the collector. Collectors, to my knowledge, don't write poems. And poets, as they gladly well might tell you, don't collect. But listen now to one of them on noticing. These are three stanzas from "Afterwards" by Thomas Hardy:

When the Present has latched its postern behind my tremulous stay,
And the May month flaps its glad green leaves like wings,
Delicate-filmed as new-spun silk, will the neighbours say,
"He was a man who used to notice such things"?

If it be in the dusk when, like an eyelid's soundless blink,
The dewfall-hawk comes crossing the shades to alight
Upon the wind-warped upland thorn, a gazer may think,
"To him this must have been a familiar sight." . . .

And will any say when my bell of quittance is heard in the gloom,
And a crossing breeze cuts a pause in its outrollings,
Till they rise again, as they were a new bell's boom,
"He hears it not now, but used to notice such things"?

DAVID B. LITTLE

Art in a Library

CONCORD has an excellent public library, and Concord people know it. Circulation of books has doubled in the last ten years. During 1965, 11,148 card holders borrowed 224,876 volumes at a rate exceeding 1,000 volumes a day on six occasions. In 1955, 5,158 people held library cards and took home 108,975 volumes. During this period the town increased in size from 10,880 residents to 14,516.

Nor are books and phonograph records all that the Concord Free Public Library has to offer. Since the fall of 1947 an unbroken series of art exhibitions in our gallery have delighted, amused, amazed, annoyed, and bored the thousands of book lovers who have been attracted or trapped into looking at the pictures there.

Concord people who confine their reading to our three weekly newspapers are made aware of these exhibitions by unsigned art reviews written by the gallery staff for the sole purpose of pulling them in. Since a good part of our gallery time is devoted to Concord artists, including those in our public and private schools, these reviews are effective. What parent will stay at home when his child's masterpiece is hanging in the library

gallery? Having once visited the gallery, he will visit it again.

This is our library today, an active cultural center in a small Massachusetts town whose citizens have long taken an active and constructive interest in town affairs. One citizen gave the library to the town in 1873, the rest have stoutly supported the Library Committee's requests at town meeting for operating funds ever since.

Why does our Concord library concern itself with art? Why should any library reach out beyond the world of books, handicapped as most libraries are by limitations of staff and space and funds in their efforts to make the public aware of the actual and potential value of their holdings? The answers lie deep in the history of libraries in America. Like so many important events, they were not planned. They merely happened.

In most communities a library was usually the first institution established for the cultural benefit of its citizens. It attracted gifts from public-spirited people, not only of books but also of objects of natural history, science, art, archaeology, and personal significance to the donor. There were no other institutions to which such generosity could be directed. However interesting these gifts were at the time they were made, today they are often imbedded in dusty cases in a seldom visited room which is badly needed for other library purposes. Such rooms are a static and crowded display, not attractive to a modern audience, and libraries, to be effective, must serve the needs of today.

Changing exhibitions attractively mounted in bright uncrowded surroundings have doubled the attendance figures in our museums, even those whose permanent collections are justly famous for their quality and range. They have spread a knowledge and love of science and art far beyond the wealthy and privileged classes whose exclusive preserve the patronage of culture once was. Changing exhibitions are, therefore, of in-

terest to libraries as an additional contribution to their townspeople. Perhaps the experience of the Concord Free Public Library may serve as a guide to other libraries considering this step into the present day.

William Munroe, donor of our library building in 1873, hoped that the next stage in its development would be a museum of science and art. He provided plans and invested capital for its construction so that both would be available when needed. He and his friends gave pictures, sculpture, coins, and natural history materials to be its nucleus.

A new stack wing was added in 1917 but Mr. Munroe's dream of a museum was not fulfilled until 1933 when a small art gallery, three reading rooms, and an office for the staff were built. The collections grew steadily during these first sixty years of the library's existence, however, even if space to house them did not. Paintings spread like wisteria along the railings of the two balconies over our octagonal delivery room, blurring its handsome outlines into a fussy Victorian mess.

The artist Charles Hovey Pepper reorganized the decoration of the library in 1934, banishing most of our art treasures to the basement where they joined the science and natural history collections which had never left it. Visitors no longer saw very many paintings and sculptures, but what they saw looked well and increased the attractiveness of their surroundings.

Mr. Pepper unfortunately did not pay equal attention to the basement storage. It was a dramatic illustration of the premise that library schools should provide training in the care and handling of special collections, by which is meant all objects other than books. Frames and glass were broken, pictures were torn and soiled. Very few remained in exhibitable condition.

The task of deciding which of our special collections we wanted to keep and which we wanted to discard was complicated by the absence of more than a summary and incomplete

record. If the first step in solving a problem is to define it, our special collections had first to be properly identified.

Librarians, the world's most compulsive cataloguers, have often grievously failed to catalogue the special collections existing in their institutions, either from the dim and distant past or dumped upon their defenseless heads by determined donors, on the specious grounds that the special collections are not books. And yet the same principle applies: an uncatalogued item is a lost item.

Efforts to transform our special collections from a permanent resting place to a significant cultural contribution would be useless unless additions to them require the consent of the library as well as of the donor. The second step, therefore, in solving our problem removed from our librarian the authority to accept or decline gifts for the special collections. Additions and subtractions may now be made only by vote of the Library Corporation, a self-perpetuating body of five trustees whose decisions are made at closed meetings and released in the name of the corporation.

A careful and deliberate program of elimination was begun together with a restoration program for the objects retained. More than half of the pictures were sold in 1950, by vote of the Corporation, followed by much of the sculpture from the basement five years later. Steel storage racks were installed in a basement room to house the remaining pictures so that they would not again be damaged.

Many donors and prospective donors are distressed by the thought that their gifts are not guaranteed a permanent resting place in the library. This problem is particularly acute where family heirlooms are involved, and there is no easy answer to it. The quality of an object and its association with the town are the best guarantee of a place in our collection. The corporation has spent several thousand dollars over the past fifteen years on the restoration and preservation of objects meeting these cri-

teria. It is better for objects which do not qualify to return to circulation than to remain buried in storage.

Webster defines a library as "An apartment, a series of apartments, or a building, devoted to a collection of books, manuscripts, etc., kept for use but not for sale; as a college library; also, an institution for the custody or administration of such a collection; as a public library."

But what is a collection? Webster defines a collection as "a gathering or assemblage of objects or persons, an accumulation of specimens of a certain class, as for ornamental or educational purposes." Webster goes on to say that "collection usually implies some order, arrangement or unity of effect."

This definition may be carried further. There are three essential ingredients of a collection: first, of course, the objects; second, a place to put them; and, third, someone to care for them and to interpret them. Without this third and often overlooked ingredient, a collection may be preserved, as in a grave, but it is of little use, either for instruction or pleasure, to anyone.

Without someone to care for them objects may not even be preserved. Collectors are custodians, not owners. Good collectors pass on their collections to the next generation in good condition. Without good collectors we would know as little about the Italian Renaissance as we do about classical Greece.

Some collections are like trees. Others are like a Victorian funeral wreath under a bell jar. Trees grow in a manner not entirely predictable, abandoning some branches in favor of others, shedding leaves, losing deadwood, and living branches also, to the pressure of storms. Funeral wreaths grow dusty and dim under their bell jars, evoking less and less interest as the years pass by.

The Corporation of the Concord Free Public Library is determined not to have a bell jar collection. Having nearly com-

pleted the change from its original concept of a well-rounded museum, it is placing increasing emphasis on the acquisition, preservation, and display of materials of special Concord interest which are appropriate to a library.

Other materials of special Concord interest are housed in the Concord Antiquarian Society's museum, a handsome building containing a series of period rooms illustrating the tastes of a small, prosperous, Massachusetts town from the late seventeenth century through the Victorian era. The society was founded in 1886 and moved into its present quarters in 1930.

The Concord Art Association began its career in 1917, hanging occasional changing exhibitions in the town hall. It moved into its own quarters in 1921 where it has one gallery larger than the library's and three smaller ones. Its relationships with the Boston commercial galleries, especially Doll & Richards, have been long and happy. Most of its exhibitions are drawn from commercial sources. It is actively interested in selling pictures.

Neither of these institutions can be placed in the bell jar category. Neither one operates in the areas of particular interest to the Library.

The Corporation is also determined to attract the library's book patrons up the stairs to the gallery by presenting frequently changing exhibitions drawn from outside sources as well as from our own collections. We are indebted to the late Dorothy Adlow, distinguished art critic on the *Christian Science Monitor*, for the artistic policies of the gallery. More than any other person, she is the foundation on which our gallery flourishes.

It all began in the spring of 1947 when she declined my invitation to review an excellent show at the Concord Art Centre. Why should she review it, she asked, when she had already written up those very same pictures at Doll & Richards gallery in Boston the previous winter?

There are many good artists, she told me, who deserve a showing and don't get one from the museums and commercial galleries. Why not look for the young artists, the unrecognized older ones, and those of the past whose work has been undeservedly forgotten? You can provide a definite service in a much neglected field, she said, and not be merely a suburban reflection of a city art gallery.

This suggestion involved too great a change in policy for the Concord Art Centre to follow, but it opened for me an attractive alternative which interested me deeply. I cast a covetous eye on the gallery in the Concord Free Public Library, which was empty or worse most of the time. As I was an elected member of the town Library Committee, I soon received permission from the committee and the Library Corporation to use it.

The library staff had been somewhat soured by the behavior of occasional exhibition committees who hung pictures with vast enthusiasm and noise, only to leave the show to wither on the walls until someone else came to call for it. One ungallant patron, fleeing from the reading room to the stacks for a little peace and quiet, described the hanging process as "twenty women with twenty different ideas and one hammer."

I promised that I would not make any noise or bother the librarians, but I have managed to do both fairly steadily ever since without causing any conflicts. The librarians are delighted with the additional service to the town provided by the gallery and have co-operated with me in every way.

The requirements for running an art gallery are identical to those of any other task: time, staff, and space. We obtain the time by limiting the number of exhibitions each year and by keeping some of them on the walls longer, perhaps, than the public response to them warrants.

Staff is a vital factor. Some one person: a librarian, a library trustee, or a fully committed volunteer, must accept total responsibility for the gallery and be technically qualified to do so. If the time requirement is reasonable the staff is not hard to find. Planning an exhibition schedule is done best by the person who will actually make the schedule work. The skills in handling works of art are easily acquired, from a nearby museum, perhaps, or from a competent mover of household effects. Care is the chief ingredient. There is nothing mysterious about them.

Space, of course, is important, space in which to show works of art, space in which to house that part of the permanent collection not on view, and space in which to store temporary exhibitions before and after their appearance in the gallery.

Not many libraries can boast of a gallery whose physical assets are as good as ours. The room is roughly thirty-four feet by sixteen with four-foot diagonals filling the corners. The walls are of wood covered with unbleached Irish linen. It is lighted from above by electricity when needed and by a skylight. Before and after a loan exhibition, pictures are stored in a locked room beside it. The gallery is used for no other purpose, and this is important. A dual purpose gallery and lecture hall or reading room is half bad in two languages, adding up to total failure.

Our gallery is just the right size for us. If it were any smaller, we would be frustrated. If it were any bigger, we would be overworked. Most of our exhibitions contain from fourteen to twenty-one pictures. We do not show objects in the round because we can neither mount them nor protect them. The gallery is in a traffic area frequently crossed by patrons on their way from the main floor to the first balcony bookshelves. The central one-third of it is visible from the delivery desk.

Loan exhibitions of the character described by Dorothy Adlow

became the regular program of the library gallery. For the first year most of the shows were targets of opportunity. As each was hung we wondered what we would find to hang next. In later years the planning for each year's program has been more complete.

We aim for twelve to fourteen exhibition periods each year varying in length from two to six weeks. In the beginning this schedule was a brittle thing. I did not know how to bend it or stretch it to accommodate an unexpected opportunity or an artist who was not ready at his appointed time. I even agreed with some professional gallery directors who bitterly declare that the only good artists are the dead ones. Now our schedule is equally precise in its planning but it seldom ends a year without changes in date and content.

Ideally each gallery year should be planned to provide our visitors with a representative cross section of artistic achievement in the various media, past and present. Actually, we work just as the larger galleries do. We take what we want of what we can get. Dorothy Adlow's guidelines still hold, however. We will not show anything that can be seen better elsewhere.

Concord is full of schools, both public and private. Ten weeks during the winter months are devoted to the work of their pupils, two weeks to each school. These shows are mounted with the same care accorded to the work of professional artists. The pictures are not crowded on the walls nor are they hung on some anthropological theory that the age of the artist should determine the location of his work in the gallery.

We also have a Concord Artists' Annual exhibition open to all residents of Concord. There is no jury either for the selection of the pictures or to award prizes. So far we have been able to find space for at least one picture by each artist submitting one or more. There are no prizes.

The first of these exhibitions was sparse and not very good.

One of the best pictures in it had been painted by a resident of our old ladies' home when she was a young woman fifty years before. The artist was so cheered by this recognition, delayed though it was, that she began painting again and kept on beautifying our Concord Artists' shows until she died. If we had done nothing else, our providing this delightful lady with a late vocation made all of our efforts seem worthwhile.

Concord has grown since 1948 and its population has changed. All of the work exhibited in recent Concord Artists' Annuals has been created since the exhibition of the previous year. The artists include graduates of the major art schools in America and a few in Europe. From their number we choose many of our group and one-man shows. We cannot take the credit for this influx of artists into Concord as many of them are wives of university professors and electronic specialists from the new industries along Route 128. We do know, however, that the availability of the gallery provides them with an incentive to paint.

We also recognize the existence of art beyond our borders. One of our best watercolor shows came north on tour from Georgia. We have shown prints from Mexico, Japan, and Baffin Island. We have borrowed from the Harvard University museums and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, for theme shows, "Back to School" and "Bucolic New England," for example, which small galleries can often do better than big ones. Big museums are usually willing to lend to small ones in their geographical area if the requests are reasonable, modest, and presented well in advance of the date of the opening.

Reviews of our exhibitions for the local weekly newspapers are of necessity written by the gallery staff. Country weeklies operate on a small budget and must depend upon unpaid volunteers for much of their news coverage. We keep our reviews brief and to the point, avoiding art jargon and concentrating on

persuading readers to come to see the shows for themselves. Our copy is neatly typed, double spaced, ready to print and submitted well before the press deadline. We also cover, on request, other cultural events than our own, thus earning the editor's good will. The Concord newspapers have done very well by us.

Dorothy Adlow covered many of our more important shows for the *Christian Science Monitor*, increasing to the artists thus honored the value of an exhibition in our gallery.

Early in 1948 Dorothy Adlow's predictions about the usefulness of the gallery were fulfilled. A skating scene in watercolor, signed by A. F. Davis and dated 1892, had been on exhibition in the Concord Art Centre. In my review of the show I wrote that I did not know who A. F. Davis was nor could I identify the scene, which I believed to be somewhere in the vicinity of Concord. I asked my readers for further information and promptly forgot about the whole affair. After all, who reads art reviews in a country weekly newspaper?

I found out the day after the paper appeared. The gist of the many telephone calls was that A. F. Davis was Arthur F. Davis of Acton, their retired town librarian, that he was still alive and that I should have known about him. I called on the old gentleman to make my peace and we slowly became good friends. He was living alone, watched over by faithful neighbors. Badly crippled by arthritis, he was too independent to accept more than a fraction of the help which was so freely offered.

During many visits I saw the stacks of his paintings tucked away in dusty corners of his house and learned of more which were owned and loved by his fellow townspeople. When I broached the question of a one-man show for him at the Concord library he at first refused on the grounds that I had come too late. He was too old, he said, to bother with such things.

Nevertheless, he was at last persuaded and we spent several happy months planning the show. Owners of his pictures were eager to make his first one-man show a success both by lending their own and by tracking down others.

The exhibition went on view in mid-August of 1948 for six weeks. Concord and Acton people came in large numbers. Dorothy Adlow reviewed it in the *Monitor* and published photographs of several pictures which obviously appealed to her readers as they roused up a flurry of correspondence from as far away as Australia. Mr. Davis was delighted to have people interested in his work again and did a brisk business in sales for the first time in years.

There are few such opportunities in life to bring pleasure to many without taking away something from someone else. The library gallery provides this opportunity in full measure.

The summer of 1949 brought another happy experience to the gallery. Charles Hovey Pepper of Brookline, formerly of Concord, artist, critic, and patron of the arts, was in the process of closing down his studio and taking life easy after eighty-odd strenuous years. His advice and encouragement in the conduct of the gallery had been invaluable since the beginning.

Would he like a one-man show? Yes, indeed he would, and he had it. Mr. Pepper had one favor to ask, however. He had hung shows at the Boston Art Club and elsewhere since 1917 with "young" Harold McBrine and would dearly love to do this one the same way.

Both of the old gentlemen realized that this was probably the last exhibition that they would ever hang together so they made the most of their opportunity. Mr. Pepper laid out the pictures around the room to his evident satisfaction preparatory to hanging them and then asked Mr. McBrine how he liked the arrangement.

“Terrible!” roared Mr. McBrine. Both men were slightly deaf, but neither was as deaf as the other thought he was.

“What do you know about art?” thundered Mr. Pepper in reply, and both answered in chorus, “Nothing!”

Long-dead cats from forgotten exhibitions of the previous thirty years were hastily unburied and flung joyously back and forth as the pictures were hung on the walls. No other work was accomplished in the library that day.

There are various rules, natural laws or definitions associated with the operation of an art gallery in a library which I have discovered just as I have discovered the obstructions in our Concord rivers. I have collided with them unexpectedly, and sometimes I have been overturned.

The first of these declares that the gallery must always be subordinate to the library which houses it. It enhances the collections of books but it must not interfere with them. When the art collections of the Boston Athenæum began to crowd the books one hundred years ago, the Athenæum’s governing board wisely rounded up the support necessary to found the Museum of Fine Arts in 1870 and deposited their art collections in it.

The second of these applies equally to all human activities and is, therefore, universally ignored. Requests for loans should be scaled to stay within the capabilities of the gallery. In other words, don’t bite off more than you can chew.

Major works of art are properly the concern of major collectors and institutions. I am using the word “major” in its monetary sense here, failing a better definition. Small galleries have no business with the exhibition of major works of art unless they are equipped to handle and safeguard them as a major institution does.

How much risk is the gallery equipped to handle? The risk begins when the loan is removed from the lender’s wall and

continues until it is returned to the point of origin. Transportation is a harsh reality, not a magic carpet. Every time a work of art is handled, it dies a little, even when the person doing the handling is skilled in the process. It is abusing the generosity of the lenders, upon whom all loan exhibitions depend, to subject their loans to unusual risks.

Small galleries need not limit themselves to shows borrowed locally. Both the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service in Washington and the American Federation of Arts, New York, provide packaged shows ranging in size from the Iranian Art Treasures, rental fee \$15,000 for six weeks, to a selection of Daumier caricatures at \$100. These smaller shows are well within the capacity of a library gallery to handle. They bring to a small community a skilfully chosen and durably mounted sampling of the best a metropolitan collection has to offer.

When we are planning an exhibition of pictures from nearby sources we use a truck or station wagon big enough to handle safely the largest of the loans requested. Our gallery holds just a station wagon-full of pictures, a convenient unit of measure which lenders sometimes find confusing.

We are cautious about borrowing oil paintings as they are particularly susceptible to puncture wounds, rips, and scratches. The chances of damage during transportation are lessened by the use of corrugated cardboard dividers, quilts, and blankets. The chances of damage while on the gallery walls are lessened when the gallery is watched by a librarian or by a special guard.

Since there are seldom enough librarians to handle the demands for books and since special guards are beyond our budget, we show more watercolors, prints, and drawings under glass than we do oils whose surfaces are unprotected. When oil paintings are on view, and at risk, on our walls, we worry about them. When one is damaged our distress, if not our lia-

bility, is as great for the injured work of a school-child as it is for that of a professional artist. Both are equally important in our eyes.

Fine arts insurance is a desirable protection but it is ruinously expensive unless the standards of positive protection employed by larger museums are met. When we borrow from larger museums they insure their loans to us at our expense and we are protected against lawsuits either by the lender or his underwriter. Other lenders either buy their own insurance at their expense or take a chance along with us. There is a chance of damage, too. Newspaper readers are familiar with the stories of theft and vandalism occurring even in our most carefully guarded institutions. Concord is not exempt.

The third of these rules has to do with records. We issue receipts to our lenders and obtain their signatures acknowledging the safe return of their loans. This formality is the subject of great amusement among our lenders but it pays off. We have a record of what we borrowed and what we did with it. On several occasions, years after the event, we have been called upon to prove our actions. While our local lenders might not sue us if we lost a loan, we would surely lose the lenders' confidence and be unable to borrow from them again.

On the back of each of our gallery receipts appears the following text:

NOTICE

The Library makes no charge for the use of its Gallery and takes no commission on sales. It carries no insurance on its contents. Although the Library exercises the same precautions for the care and safety of the property of others as it does for its own, objects on loan are of necessity accepted at the lender's risk.

This paragraph explains the limits of our liability and the reasons for those limits. If we stood to profit from the sale of art in

our gallery or from admission fees, our obligations to the lenders, I am told, would be greater.

When the pictures in a loan exhibition are for sale, they may be purchased from the lender or his dealer. A price list is usually available at the delivery desk upon request. We help the would-be purchaser to communicate with the vendor so that they may complete the sale between them, but no money passes through our hands and we take no responsibility for the sale.

The fourth rule is a fascinating one. The response to an exhibition is in direct proportion to the amount of time spent in its organization. This is especially true when the show is a local one. The more people we stir up beforehand, the more people come to see it.

We mounted an exhibition of watercolors from Concord collections a few years ago, twenty-one pictures from twenty-one lenders, ranging in style from the English nineteenth century through Dodge MacKnight to the saucy contemporary Esther Geller. Even the French Barbizon School was represented: a handsome pastoral by Anton Mauve. Many Concord households were visited in the search for pictures and more were reached by word of mouth. The show was intended to illustrate the wide range of tastes in town, and it did.

This sort of exhibition attracts all who are asked to lend, their friends and relations, as well as many who are not. It can best be organized by a committee so that no one person is burdened with too much of the work. Few people in town were unaware of the project during its gestation and many came to view the fruits.

In an age where publicity rather than quality determines the response to a service or product, advertising is essential. Our budget limits us to a placard on the library bulletin board and the reviews in the Concord press. Our exhibitors are encouraged to send out postcard notices and to hold formal openings

if they wish. Of necessity, they do these things themselves and at their own expense.

We change our shows on Saturdays, hold our openings on Sundays when the library is ordinarily closed and mail our reviews to the press on Sunday nights to arrive well before the Wednesday morning press deadlines. Our papers appear Thursday evenings on the newsstands and Friday mornings in the mail to subscribers.

A work of art is not merely a thing. It is the embodiment of an idea. As such it has a life and personality of its own independent of its materials. For every recognized major work there are thousands of minor ones which deserve a showing and which may be recognized as major if given a chance. Vincent van Gogh could not even obtain a showing in his lifetime. Paul Cézanne achieved his first one-man show in 1895 after thirty-five years as an artist. Who knows which of the artists of our time will be recognized in the future as being our best?

An art gallery in a library is better equipped than any other gallery to meet Dorothy Adlow's challenge. Its physical needs for space, security, maintenance, light, heat, and other creature comforts are supplied without charge by the library which houses it. It does not have to worry about paying the rent or making a big name for itself in the art world. It can concentrate on the encouragement of art appreciation in its community and of artists from a wider area. The library even provides an audience whenever the gallery is placed across a route used by book patrons. There is none of the pressure to earn money from sales experienced by commercial galleries or of the pressure to show major works which prevents most museums from showing minor ones. Our little galleries build up the public interest and encourage the creation of art. On both of these functions the large galleries must someday depend.

Major or minor, each exhibition, each picture, each lender is important. A well-chosen and well-displayed exhibition is a compliment to the artist, the lender, and the visitor to the gallery.

SINCLAIR H. HITCHINGS

A New Audience for Our Public Collections

THE WIGGIN COLLECTION is a miniature art museum within a great library. There are times when I think we have the best of both worlds. We have the sense of closeness to our community which is an essential quality of a public library. We share the public support, through the Library's portion of each year's Boston city budget, which pays our salaries and equips our department with tools and materials. We work to merit private support, and from it, little by little, we are building endowment which enables us to pay for the enterprises we are unable to underwrite with public money. We are raising money for a publishing program, with all the challenge of the illustrated book as a way to stir the mind and fire the imagination. We are putting brick on brick to make a firm foundation of endowment to support the endlessly fascinating, stimulating, and enlightening mission of collecting. And we are working toward the combination of private and public support for special enterprises which is making possible today's symposium.

From our vantage point as a collection of art in a library, we can see in miniature in our own work many of the problems of American collections today. A number of facts about today's audience, and today's art-owning institutions, stand out.

One is the student revolution. The new place of college or junior college as an essential part of growing up in America is

multiplying our audience manyfold. In American college towns art is a reproduction of a Kollwitz lithograph for sale for a modest price in a bookstore window; it is a poster telling of the latest show at the college's new center for the visual arts; it is Art 1 and 2 which everybody takes.

How do we reach this student audience? For the Wiggin Collection, which was given to the Boston Public Library with the hope, and belief, that it could become a force in education in art, the answers are bound to be one of the determinants of our policy and our daily work.

The Wiggin Gallery, besides being an exhibition room, gives access to the Fine Arts Department of this library; a steady traffic of students from high schools, colleges, and art schools in the Boston area comes here to use the books their schools don't provide. They also use this gallery.

When Philip Johnson's new building, adjoining our palace built by Charles McKim in the 1890's, more than doubles the space within the central library, we hope to retain the present proximity of the Print Department to the Fine Arts Department. A student coming for books on Toulouse-Lautrec to use in writing a paper is in rather good luck to find himself looking at original works of art by Lautrec in our gallery. He is in equally good luck if he discovers the power of original prints and drawings by other artists whose work he may be encountering for the first time.

Every direct seeking out of individual students requires an investment of time and sometimes of money. We are going to start making this kind of investment as a regular part of our work, a year hence. In Concord David Little is exhibiting the work of Concord students; in Boston our art schools do this for their students. What we shall attempt is not a showing of student work but an annual show aimed in a different way at the student audience. With the co-operation of the Fogg Art Mu-

seum, the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, and the Massachusetts College of Art, we will obtain the names and addresses of students whom the show might interest and will invite each one to the opening. The work involved in transcribing addresses and addressing invitations to a group that will change each year will be more than repaid during an annual gathering of students in this setting.

Our first exhibition of this kind will be one we have had in mind a long time. It will have the same title as our series of new dioramas—*Printmakers at Work*—and it will show stones and copperplates and engraved woodblocks of various artists. We will exhibit engraving tools and lithographic tools; preliminary drawings for prints; proofs of prints with the artist's notes for changes; and the finished print. Some of the most interesting pieces in the show will be the surfaces on which the artist worked and from which he took prints, including the copperplate on which Hogarth engraved one of the scenes in his Election Series.

Exhibitions come and go; the printed word and picture in the illustrated book remain a lasting source of stimulus and knowledge. We have no fund here to provide for the printing of exhibition catalogues, but during the past year we have begun to seek out funds to make this collection not only an enterprise in the preservation and showing of works of art, but also as an undertaking in continued collecting and in publishing. Starting with the brief guide to the Wiggin Collection which is now in preparation, we are going to be publishing paperbacks in which pictures and text are united, page by page, and printed by photo-offset lithography. These books will be sold to a wide audience here and abroad. One of our projects for publishing during the next few years is a series of 32-page picture-books each dealing with the work of one of the artists represented in our new dioramas. We also hope to publish, at

least once a year, a larger book of this kind, running from 64 to 128 pages, of which our guide to the collection will be the first. If there is any single "best" tool for the deepening of America's interest in art, it is the inexpensive, well-designed, well-illustrated paperback published to open up to the reader new knowledge of art.

A great many Americans seek out art in public galleries today, and some of those who have gone on from student days to the business of earning a living, establishing a household, and raising a family are intrigued by the idea of owning art. By and large, they have the means to collect, at least modestly, but they don't know where to start or how to start.

Sometimes they just have trouble getting up the courage to start. There has to be willingness to make an occasional mistake; there has to be an eagerness to see, to learn, and to discover; there has to be an openness to delight, to amusement, and to the collector's happy experience sometimes of love at first sight. All of these qualities can be cultivated, and very enjoyably at that. The key is to look, think, and learn, for knowledge brings confidence and a surer, less inhibited response to what we see. To this recipe add the willingness to take oneself with a grain of salt, and to listen attentively to the opinions of others.

Museum exhibitions do not necessarily open up to people an interest in owning works of art. Yet it is that interest in collecting and owning art which can bridge the distance between the museum and the home. Why should art always be something we go out to see, and leave behind us when we return home? It is the interest in collecting, also, which gives artists and art dealers a living wage, and which implies a nation's respect for art. By implication, art is admitted to be not a luxury but an essential. It is one of the few elements that survive even the greatest civilizations. It is an awakening force and a source of discovery as well as pleasure.

There is no sight more enjoyable to me than the sight of paintings or prints or drawings or sculpture which are part of someone's home and daily existence. Public collections are vested interests and some curators are prowlers who make it their business to coax, charm, wheedle, or cajole people into transferring works of art from the home to the museum. Part of our real business is to encourage the private ownership of art. In doing so we shall be quite able to go right on building our public collections.

In an age of mass education, wealth and leisure what are the public collections doing to serve their new audience? Frankly, the various collections open to the public are not numerous enough even to begin to minister to all the museum-minded inhabitants of our age. So members of the audience itself are taking a hand, forming new collections and founding museums everywhere. By the end of this century museums will be as firmly established a part of the scene as our public libraries. Let me name only six of the post-World-War-II museums, all ones within close range of Boston, to suggest the gathering force and the varied subject-matter of this museum movement: the De Cordova and Dana Museum and Park in Lincoln; the Kendall Whaling Museum in Sharon; the Rose Art Museum at Brandeis University; the Merrimac Valley Textile Museum in North Andover; the Captain Robert Bennet Forbes Museum of the Boston China Trade, in Milton; Plimoth Plantation not far from Plymouth Rock.

There are three very different currents running in our world of museums. One is the traditional ideal of the museum as a great treasure house preserving and exhibiting art, offering an open door to all who may come, and sheltering under its roof the scholar and the student. A second is the nationwide appeal to a mass audience which is being made by Colonial Williamsburg, Sturbridge Village, Plimoth Plantation, and other enter-

prises which present a three-dimensional picture of times and places, habitations, people, and ways of life in our history. A third is the community or regional museum which thrives on the enthusiasms of the people who live near it and which seeks to serve their needs; to provide them with a good time, and to offer them a profusion of leisure activities which may range all the way from studio classes in sculpture to fund-raising fairs, and from choral singing to exhibitions of pop art or Rembrandt.

Each of these sectors of the museum world, it seems to me, gets along hospitably and pleasantly with the others, but there is not much cross-fertilization of philosophy about what any of the institutions concerned could be or should be.

The traditional objectives of our great museums, collecting, preserving, studying, and exhibiting works of art, will be as valid a century from now as they are today. These objectives are pursued by men and women many of whom have been willing to turn great talents to museum work at the sacrifice of what in business or even politics or teaching would be considered a decent salary. I will take the liberty of calling attention to another side of our museums, however: the tight little, snug little worlds, not very open to the public, in which lots of people are puttering their days away, working with superb collections and accomplishing a little of the day-to-day work that needs to be done, but making remarkably little contribution to the life of our country. I except those refreshing people, the classicists, who spend their summers digging up the past in Greece or Asia Minor and are up to their ears in teaching, writing, and curatorial work during the off-season.

In salaries, retirement plans and kindred matters of bread and butter, most of our greatest museums are decades behind the times. They do not even try to compete in the open market for the best talents in each year's crop of liberal arts college graduates. Frankly, they get very few of the best talents. A rarity,

among museum directors and curators alike, is the competence at conducting day-to-day business which is always in demand in every area of enterprise. We must realize the challenge of bringing our major art museums fully into our national life.

In contrast, the big outdoor museums have streamlined and efficient management, pay better salaries, and draw in a good deal of new blood. They excel in showmanship and hospitality, but not always in the kind of realization of the past which the historian would call accurate. They are a bit troubled, and rightly so, by the feeling that they may be prettying up and glamorizing the past. We are often asked, these days, to visualize our ancestors as natural-born antique collectors who spent a large part of their time in ambitious schemes of interior decoration.

The community museums, or so it seems to me, are the ones which are most closely knit into the social fabric of our times. They cater to the desire to do things, to learn something, and to enjoy oneself. They emphasize the social side of most activities with happy results. As long as a delicate balance between serious effort and social fun can be maintained, these museums are an eminently effective force in popular education. They are giving people a sense of doing the job themselves, and of creating something, which seems to elude the largest museums—possibly because these bigger neighbors have reached a scale in which most gatherings are crowds.

I hope that the community museums will devise a way to find more and more of a place for collecting and scholarship in annual budgets that are oriented toward "group activities." I hope that our larger museums, at the same time, will realize that new and smaller divisions must be found: branch exhibition galleries in different parts of a sprawling city, and larger subdivisions set apart as The Cloisters are from the Metropolitan Museum. And I hope that these branches will reach into the

lives of their areas just as branch libraries or the community museums do. One thinks of branch exhibition galleries in the heart of retail shopping or banking districts.

We who form the staff of the Wiggin Collection are lucky in our smallness; there is no front office in this collection and we meet people face to face. We cannot ignore any more than our neighbor collections, however, the fact that you cannot always be asking people to come to you. You have to be willing to go also to them.

A regional library system is coming into being in Massachusetts. Within the next several years we at the Boston Public Library hope to be able to create a travelling exhibition service reaching out to libraries in the eastern area. This will require a vehicle, a couple more staff members, and space in which to put the exhibitions together. Each exhibition will be fitted to the exhibition facilities and security arrangements of the library showing it. Some shows will be shipped already mounted on exhibition panels. We will find a way to provide the necessary insurance.

We are also considering the establishment of a loan service for selected prints. The great example for everyone was Elmer Adler's success with this idea at Princeton. Undergraduates chose a framed print from the group available to them, signed on the dotted line, and walked away with pictures to hang in their room for a semester. They are still doing so, in larger numbers than ever. As we think of such a service we can profit from the experience of Karl Nyren, director of the Cary Library in Lexington, who has devised a highly successful system by which framed prints by contemporary artists working in the Boston area are rented to Lexington citizens for a dollar a month. If the borrower likes the print, he can buy it directly from the artist.

Earlier I said that the Wiggin Collection represents in miniature many of the problems of larger public collections; indeed

it does, being often short of hands to do all we have to do, and short of other essentials including space: our holdings, like those of many of our neighbors, have outgrown our present quarters. This is an old story, and it is a relief to be able to say that in the rearrangement of the Library that will follow the construction of our new building, the Print Department is tentatively assigned not only our present gallery and office space but the entire adjoining side of the third floor of this building. We shall have at least four times our present storage space, more generous office space, some real table space for our patrons to spread out on when they are studying prints and drawings, and additional gallery space, including a poster gallery which will enable us to show samplings from the collections here, even posters that are five or six feet in height.

More important, really, than physical problems is the question of philosophy and character posed by Dorothy Adlow for Concord's galleries: Why be doing the same thing everybody else is doing? Why not contribute something useful which they are not doing well or may not be doing at all?

Unlike most of its fellow collections in the United States, the Wiggin Collection does not attempt to be a comprehensive survey of prints and printmakers over five centuries. Instead, we specialize. We define the time-span of our presentday collecting as the period in which we already have some unrivalled collections—roughly from 1800 to the present, and with concentration on European and American printmaking.

Following one of Albert Wiggin's interests in collecting, we pursue those intimate pieces of expression which show an artist shaping an idea: preliminary drawings, proofs with notes and drawn-in alterations, everything which shows the process from which the completed print came. From sequences like these, it becomes almost possible, in retrospect, to look over the artist's shoulder as he works.

We also collect, whenever we can, a comprehensive group of an artist's prints which will reflect as fully as possible his impulses and ideas, and disciplines. It is one thing to have a representative group of prints by Daumier and another to pursue his life's work in printmaking. Three thousand of his lithographs are a part of this collection, and in time most of those we do not have will be found to give the student, the scholar, the dealer, the collector, and the present-day artist an even more remarkable source of information and discovery. We pursue this idea for many other artists of this century and the last. To give an example, over the past four years we have acquired, by gift and purchase, more than a thousand American posters of the 1890's, enabling us to show the great poster enthusiasm in full bloom over here, and encouraging us to go further in collecting the work of more or less forgotten artists like Ethel Reed, Will Bradley, and Edward Penfield. Another example: last year we were fortunate in being able to buy a collection of 150 lithographs by Charles Shannon, one of the most sensitive and most gifted of English printmakers. This collection encompasses virtually his entire life's work in printmaking.

We follow Dorothy Adlow's advice and David Little's example by seeking out good work which may not be getting a showing elsewhere. We buy the prints and exhibit them and we benefit from the opportunity to know the artists. We can contribute, in a small way, recognition, stimulus, and encouragement.

We do not apologize for the areas in which we overlap neighboring collections, but we do not go into these areas unless something useful can be accomplished. Following the example of the New York Public Library, we gather the pictorial record of American life in prints. We do so in areas in which the Boston Public Library is already strong—views of Boston and of New England. Some of our neighbors are doing this,

too, but we find we can make a contribution in the field. We collect anything of documentary interest in this area—a woodcut on a billhead, an illustrated advertising broadside, a lithograph by Fitz Hugh Lane. Every year we acquire rare or unrecorded views and are glad to see them “on the record” in a public collection.

We likewise do not apologize for the ownership of great works of art which are also to be seen no further away than the Museum of Fine Arts or the Fogg Museum. Many of the patrons of a public library, young and old, never or seldom set foot in an art museum. A great work of art, like Rembrandt’s Hundred Guilder print or Dürer’s *St. Eustace* or Millet’s *Gleaners*, all of which are in our present exhibition, is a touchstone to which anyone can gratefully return again and again.

I wish I had time to describe in detail other ventures in which we are engaged—the publication of a major contribution to the literature of printmaking, Francis Adams Comstock’s book, *A Gothic Vision: the Work of F. L. Griggs*; our program to commission and publish prints by various artists; our plans to carry on today’s dialogue on art and education in what we hope may become an annual symposium in the setting of the Wiggin Collection; our plans, too, for a series of exhibitions and talks in 1968 on a remarkable generation of English draughtsmen, Rowlandson, Blake, and Gillray among them. Suffice it to say that we are eager to see this collection move ahead, making its contribution in many ways but most of all, I hope, helping to make art an accepted and respected part of the fabric of American life.

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